



CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RESUME

106th Congress

Date: 17 March 2000

SUBJECT: Hearing on Sustaining the All-Volunteer Force, part 2

COMMITTEE: House Armed Services
Subcommittee on Military Personnel

CHAIRMAN: The Honorable Steve Buyer (R-IN)

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Neil Abercrombie (D-HI)

WITNESSES:

Secretary Rudy de Leon, USD, Personnel & Readiness, OSD

LTG David Ohle, DCS PER, USA

VADM Norbert Ryan, CNP, USN

Lt Gen Jack Klimp, DCS MRA, USMC

Lt Gen Donald Peterson, DP, USAF

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Date: 17 Mar 00

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Subcommittee originally met on 8 Mar to focus on understanding the challenges that our military forces face in today's toughest recruiting environment. The panel was dismissed before CM Buyer had the opportunity to question them; therefore he reconvened the same panel. All members agreed a thriving sustained economy and decreased military footprint have made for challenging times in recruiting for an all-volunteer force. Mr. Buyer continued to stress the problems the committee has with the department's inconsistent budget practices. He cited the direct correlation between recruiting and retention and the inability of the services to fund the recruiting budget in a consistent manner. He projected a "recruiting flop" if the services didn't do a better job in managing this issue. CM Buyer referred to his last hearing when Gen Ryan testified and how hard he was on him about the AF not meeting end strength and breaking the law by coming in under the floor. He indicated he should have taken the opportunity to compliment the Chief on the fact that the Air Force is not willing to reduce quality standards to meet the annual accession goal.

The Subcommittee was called to order at 0840.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Buyer:

- Appreciated the Secretary and DCSPers coming back for a second round of testimony
- Congratulated Mr. deLeon on his new position and thanked him for all his work
- Waiting for the FBI file that was due to Congress (directed this statement to Mr. deLeon)
- Very upset with the Army about perceived mismanagement and involvement in a GO Reserve promotion board. Directed DoD/IG to look into this situation, if the list has been processed it should be stopped. No one should be able to manipulate the promotion board process

CM Abercrombie:

- Submitted his statement for the record
- Interested in several areas: internet recruiting, quality of recruits, Youth ChalleNGe program, education benefits--don't want to use education benefits to incentivize people to leave, TSP

WITNESS STATEMENTS

Secretary deLeon:

- Murphy Eskew brought us better business practices and better integration of all of our messages on DoD side
- Recruiters have said they feel disconnected from marketing study & what's being said/deployed
- Make sure we are focusing on the right issues for recruiting -- the intangibles
- Worked with Gen Max Thurman in the early '80s--"Be all you can be" is his mantra
- Recruiting is important but retention is just as important -- thanked them for compensation help last year
- Retention: Army/Marines are going strong; Navy is moving in the right direction and the AF is using all their tools to turn this problem around

Lt Gen Ohle:

- Army will make end strength
- Recruiting is improved -- on schedule to make goal

- Reserve component is behind in recruiting goal
- Filling recruiters to max capacity
- Balancing recruiters between unit requirements and recruiting stations
- **CM Buyer told Lt Gen Ohle he is very close to removing the Reserve component from the active Army**
- Captain attrition is a major concern -- need to push attrition to 8% - 9%

Adm Ryan:

- Attacking field complaints through interdeployment training cycle; trying to educate mbrs
- Will make recruiting goal but the DEP is a challenge (started '00 at 28% vs 42%)
- Need to keep recruiter manning at 5,000 -- budgeted incorrectly & will take the additional numbers needed from the fleet
- Ask for help with career sea pay authorization

Lt Gen Peterson:

- Retention rates are turning around, leveling off; encouraging number over the past few months
- Recruiting is a problem we must stabilize
- We have a very marketable force -- large pull from civilian sector
- 1,200 short pilot requirements -- but '00 ACP has helped arrest the decline -- next 2-3 yrs cut this in ½
- Approximately 70% of enlisted skills on SRB-- shows inconsistency in pay comparability
- 1,400 HYT waivers given last yr helped stabilize the senior NCO force
- CM Buyer said: “the AF is in a new world. I know I was tough on the Chief when he testified about the AF end strength and how the AF is breaking the law. I should have complimented him on not reducing quality. Please pass me compliment to him”
- Programmed below end strength, but we'd like to put \$s toward recruiting/retention
- We are war on recruiting -- restoring manning for recruiters -- bldg to 2,000 to increase footprint
- Challenge to meet 34,000 goal, but not giving up
- Expanded JROTC program -- CM Buyer very interested in this program
- Military service is a national problem -- each member of Congress should take the opportunity to speak publicly about the benefits of military service -- we need to get back into the eyes of the American public

Lt Gen Klimp:

- 50% DEP -- tasked to go to 55% (currently at 52%)
- Experiencing small difficulties in 1st term retention -- putting together mobile retention teams. 176 Marines reenlisted at 2 bases -- experiencing success
- 48 hour stand down to focus on importance of Marine retention in the Corps
- 2,650 recruiters -- last year staff manned 100% -- going up to 110% to provide recruiting command the tools to keep 2650 recruiters on the street; letting people have family time, leave, education, etc
- Cautiously comfortable on retention will meet recruiting goals and end strength

KEY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANSWERS

- **CM Buyer was upset with the Army for considering a change to the slogan “Be all you can**
The Army has made no decision to change their slogan and Lt Gen Ohle thinks the Secretary was misquoted on this issue.
- CM Buyer is bothered by the Service budgets and how we are not consistent with the funding of recruiting budgets. “Does the building know I’m not going to play this game”? Mr. deLeon said we are counterintuitive -- if we make goal one year we move money the next year. Demographics have changed; therefore we have to keep a more consistent focus on budgeting for recruiting/retention
- Veterans Service Organization is a good source of recruiting support. Ask them to tell the good story; provide positive influence on current military members as well as potential recruits. Mr. Buyer would be happy to meet with the Services and the head of these 14 Veterans Service Organizations. Mr. deLeon said they were very instrumental in helping with the Funeral Honors program and would be very happy to work with them on this issue
- Recruiter access -- what is the Service doing about this problem? **Mr. deLeon** said we are working with DOE and other opportunities, but would like to take for the record to provide complete thoughts. **CM Buyer** applauded the Marine Corps in their efforts to work issues like this. Marine Corps said they work a “maneuver attack” versus a “head on” -- everyone asked that any legislation that is crafted be a “carrot” vs a “hammer”; work with educator to enlarge our footprint; work with influencers
- Selective Service is engaged in expanding its role to include MEPCON activities. Mr. deLeon asked for additional time to study this proposal and CM Buyer said if we want him to “slow roll” this initiative we should let him know

Misc questions/thoughts of interest

- Services position on **Regular** appointments at the Service Academies and how this is an emotional issue. **QFR: Attrition rate at Service Academies for the past 5-10 years and how many flag officers do we have on Active Duty that are Academy graduates.** TSP -- considering whether to remove Reserve/Guard participation to get the program moving. **WIC Overseas** -- what is causing the delay in implementation? Lengthy discussion on affirmative action and diversity and if the Services are still operating in a “**zero defect**” atmosphere. Concerns with **Murphy Eskew Survey** and the response by members that are leaving the service due to problems with “leadership

Chairman Buyer’s Closing Remarks:

CM Buyer will advise the new administration to strike the language of “global engagement”. It will impact utilization and force our allies to increase their participation. The zero defect mentality may have been used in the drawdown, but enough is enough -- we all have defects but we aspire to achieve high standards. Encourage our people that it is OK to exercise judgement--to think outside the box. Wished Mr. deLeon good luck in his confirmation hearing and thanked him for his contributions and also thanked the entire panel for returning.

The hearing concluded at 1158.